

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
PO BOX 160 KIGALI**

Remarks of the Minister of Justice/Attorney General at the RIB Service Delivery for Fair Justice Workshop

Good morning,

It is my pleasure to be here today for the official opening of this stakeholder's consultative workshop under the theme "*Synergy and Professionalism; a sustainable path to justice*". Thank you for inviting me.

The aim of this workshop is to discuss issues relating to Rwanda Investigation Bureau's service delivery for fair justice. It is an area that requires utmost vigilance, sustained and coordinated attention of all key players.

As we are aware, RIB is a Government institution that is mandated to prevent, detect and investigate crimes. For RIB to fulfill this mandate, strong partnership with stakeholders is of utmost importance. In an effort to dispense justice to citizens, RIB must work closely with partners including Prosecutors, Courts, Legal practitioners, Correctional services, Civil Society, Media, and ordinary citizens.

This partnership ensures a safe place for people to live, work, and feel safe in Rwanda, day and night. The partnership's aim is to build safer, stronger, more resilient and

confident communities. The partnership achieves this by decreasing crime and improving community safety.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Government's commitment to tackling criminal threats is a priority and this is why effective service delivery in the justice sector is a must. Criminal threats to our society constitute a challenge that we must meet effectively at all costs. New challenges demand new responses.

Rwanda has made choices regarding where the country is heading. One strategic choice is to open up to investment, tourism, to open borders, rapid movement in business and financial transactions, massive use of ICT and lots of databases and IT platforms, rule of law accountability, unity, democratic governance, zero tolerance to corruption, women and youth empowerment, environmental protection and many other open economy progressive indicators. The environment I describe above cannot co-exist with crime. Every country which has adopted a similar trajectory as ours has had to fight to eradicate crime or that trajectory has faltered.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, for the kind of country we have chosen to live in to flourish and deliver the intended dividends another strategic imperative must be put firmly in place. And that is that our ambition should be zero tolerance to crime. Any crime, be it traffic, cyber, environmental, bank, land or loan fraud, gender based crime, embezzlement, corruption, drugs, and all, threatens the very foundations of the choice of country we have made. Our determination to eradicate crime by all means provided by law needs to deepen, widen and get more intelligent. An economy such as we are rapidly achieving can only be protected by effective adherence to the rule of law.

We must all play by the rules, without exception. Our law and practice need to ensure that people entrusted with fiduciary duties exercise them prudentially. We need to be sure that people taking loans from banks intend to play by the rules and payback, not end up in courts in search of escape routes. We need to ensure that people transferring their land

titles aren't doing so to hide them from view. We need to ensure that people who respond to RIB's summons tell the truth. This is true for traffic, the environment, protection of infrastructure, children etc.. The Police, Rwanda Investigation Bureau and the National Public Prosecution Authority are required to do their job legally, firmly, decisively, fast and smart.

Therefore, the laws relating to crime prevention, detection and prosecution will have to become part of our lives as we go forward. The culture of law breaking and general advocacy for tolerance thereof will have to give way to one of the rule of law and zero tolerance for law breaking. Our oversight roles within the institutions is now stronger, the capacity of our men and women on the ground is now higher, we have no more prisoners overstaying their sentences. We aren't perfect but we should daily strive for perfection.

I am optimistic that, discussions addressing service delivery challenges will foster cooperation in effort to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute crime. The nexus to synergy and professionalism will be equally relevant for RIB for sustainable fair administration of justice. The promotion of fair justice and observance of human rights will go hand in hand with eradicating impunity. I thank Legal Aid Forum. Legal Aid Forum has been with us and grown with us. I have no doubt about their seriousness and objectivity. At times we don't agree but we both come out better. With their partnership we will, definitely, only improve.

I am aware that RIB has made good progress reaching out to partners with the aim of improving safety and security in the country. This includes strengthening relationships with partners such as Legal Aid Forum. This should continue. The role of civil society, if I may make a suggestion, will need to align to the country trajectory I described above and work to achieve it. With specific respect to criminal justice, in addition to advocacy for rights of accused, rights to legal representation and fair trial, civil society will need to work seriously in the areas of crime detection, deterrence and prevention because this is where we collectively reap benefit. The civic duty and obligation of citizens not to

commit crimes might not be a traditional civil society area but since by nature civil society works for the interest of citizens and this is an area where citizens have overwhelming interest and benefit, it should be not be difficult to include it in their scope.

I commend the leadership of RIB for organizing this workshop and for the good work that they are doing. The Ministry of Justice will always be on hand to play its role to ensure that RIB makes the necessary progress at the speed expected.

On this note, I declare this workshop officially opened.

I thank you all.